

523 ELEVENTH STREET, NW (COMMERCIAL)
(523 Eleventh Street, NW (Apartment))
Square 347
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-800

HABS
DC
WASH,
652-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDITIONAL
FOLIOS...

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

523 ELEVENTH STREET, N.W. (COMMERCIAL)
(523 ELEVENTH STREET, N.W. (APARTMENT))

HABS No. DC-800

HABS
DC
WASH
652-

LOCATION: Square 347, Lot 815
Washington, District of Columbia

SIGNIFICANCE: 523 Eleventh Street, constructed in 1890 as a store and apartments, provides an excellent example of Eastlake-inspired decorative brickwork. Designed by Pitney & Bradford as one of a pair of buildings, the facade incorporates a wealth of brick detailing including brick corbels, diaper work, and molded brick columns. The building contributes to the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site.

DESCRIPTION: 523 Eleventh Street is a two-bay, four-story brick building that faces west onto Eleventh Street. The ell-shaped building, which is in fair condition, measures 24 ft. x 50 ft. and rests on a concrete foundation. The mid-block building occupies a relatively small lot, backing up to the rear of 1008-1010 F Street (See HABS No. DC-802) rather than onto the alley that bisects the square. Only the front facade of the building is detailed. Fenestration consists of paired one-over-one windows set between brick piers. Eastlake-inspired brick detailing on the front facade includes diaper-work spandrels, molded brick columns, and an elaborate corbelled cornice. The 4th floor interior reveals that original interior finishes included reeded molding with bulls-eye corner blocks and Eastlake mantels consistent with the exterior style of the building. Original interior fixtures included elaborate radiators with fluted columns.

The building has been altered over the years. The 2nd floor was changed during the early 20th century to convert it to business use. A window was installed in the north party wall at the rear of the 2nd floor (D.C. Building Permit 1315, March 25, 1901) and an old floor was taken up (D.C. Building Permit 410, September 3, 1901). Partitions on the 2nd floor were changed in 1910 (D.C. Building Permit 7412, June 30, 1910). The most significant alteration took place in 1918 when the interior of 523 Eleventh Street was connected to the interior of 1008-1010 F Street, N.W. (See HABS No. DC-802; D.C. Building Permit 1069, September 30, 1918). The alteration of the lower two floors of the front facade of 523 Eleventh Street probably dates to 1938. Architect Vespucci V. Petrone took out a building permit to "install a steel stair, change location of entrance to 11th St. bldg., change location of toilets and remodel storefronts of 11th St. building" at a cost of \$2500 (D.C. Building Permit 215892, August 24, 1938).

HISTORY: The 1890 building permit shows that architects Pitney & Bradford designed 523 Eleventh Street as a store and flats costing \$5000. J.L. Shaffert was the builder (D.C. Building Permit 2342, June 4, 1890). John Walter, who also owned the adjacent 521 Eleventh Street (HABS No. DC-799), 1008-1010 F Street (HABS No. DC-802), and 1011 E Street (HABS No. DC-793) was the original owner.

B.B. Bradford, the architect, was born around 1858 in Cincinnati. He attended the Königliche Hoch-Schule zu Stuttgart for four years, graduating in 1879. He worked abroad for three years before returning to the United States around 1883 when he opened an office at 1313 F Street, N.W. (*Historical and Commercial Sketches of Washington and Environs*, p. 151).

Although the building may have been designed to house three flats above a store, by 1901 the 2nd floor was in commercial use (D.C. Building Permit 410, September 3, 1901). Since 1918 this building has been connected to 1008-1010 F Street, where Dr. John Walter, Jr. had his medical office. The building has housed various businesses and tenants. Several dentists including William G. Schafhirt, Grace T. Hammond, Michael Harris, and Harry Walls had their offices here through 1940. Businesses ranged from T.P. Culley & Son Pianos (1914) to barbers and beauty shops (1914, 1924, 1943, 1954) to retail outlets for electrical appliances and sewing machines (1948, 1954, and 1960). With the exception of the dentists, the turnover in the building appears to have been high. Even though there was usually one residential tenant listed each year, many of the business and retail concerns appear to have been housed on the upper floors. The Governor Guest House, furnished rooms managed by Adolph B. Kahn, first appears in the city directories in the 1950s. The Lutheran Service Lounge was located on the 2nd floor in the 1960s.¹ Presently the first floor is used as a carry-out and restaurant; the second floor as a beauty salon. Apartment units on the upper two floors are vacant.

The building will be partially demolished to construct a large office building that will occupy the western portion of Square 347. The street facade will be incorporated within the new construction. This HABS documentation was prepared pursuant to a Program of Mitigation for the required demolition. The Program of Mitigation was developed for the new project under D.C. Law 2-144, the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978.

SOURCES:

D.C. Building Permits (National Archives)
D.C. City Directories
Don't Tear It Down Downtown Survey Forms (D.C. Historic Preservation Office)
Historical Sketches of Washington and Environs. Washington, D.C.: E.E. Barton, 1884.
Hopkins Map of Washington (Library of Congress)
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Library of Congress)

¹City directory listings were sampled at five year intervals beginning in 1914, the first year that listings are indexed by address. Residents of the building in 1914 were traced back to their earliest date of occupancy.

HISTORIAN: Betty Bird, Architectural Historian
Mary K. Knill, Researcher
2607 24th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
December 1988

For documentation of individual buildings within Square 347, see:

HABS No. DC-788	Square 347 (Commercial Buildings)
HABS No. DC-789	1005 E Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-790	1007 E Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-791	1009 E Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-792	1013 E Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-793	1011 E Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-794	501-503 Eleventh Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-795	507 Eleventh Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-796	515 Eleventh Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-797	517 Eleventh Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-798	519 Eleventh Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-799	521 Eleventh Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-801	525 Eleventh Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-802	1008-1010 F Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-803	1012 F Street, NW (Commercial)
HABS No. DC-804	National Capital Press Building

ADDENDUM TO:
523 ELEVENTH STREET, NORTHWEST (COMMERCIAL)
(523 Eleventh Street, Northwest (Apartment))
Washington
District of Columbia County
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-800

HABS
DC
WASH
652-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240